

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 857

By Yager

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John Stanley Wassom of Rockwood.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John Stanley Wassom; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, the son of the late Jesse and Hazel Wassom, John Wassom was born in Spring City on May 1, 1941, and remained a lifelong resident of East Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after developing a keen interest in science in grade school, Mr. Wassom went on to graduate from Spring City High School in 1959 and earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Biological Sciences from Tennessee Technological University in 1963; he later completed a graduate degree in Genetics at the University of Tennessee School of Biomedical Sciences at the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL); and

WHEREAS, following service in the United States Army Chemical Corps from 1963 to 1965, Mr. Wassom served with acumen and alacrity as a scientist and administrator for more than thirty-eight years at ORNL, where his work included genetic toxicology, mammalian genetics, and computational chemistry. In these positions he earned the respect of his peers and superiors alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wassom also served as Director of the Environmental Mutagen and Teratogen Information Centers supported by the National Institutes of Health and was a founding member of the Environmental Mutagen Society (EMS) and an originator of DOE's Low-Dose Radiation Research Program website and the *Human Genome News*; and

WHEREAS, after retirement from ORNL in 2003, Mr. Wassom joined the staff of consulting firm YAHSGS and, later, Summitec Corporation; and

WHEREAS, highly respected by colleagues all over the world for his visionary expertise, he and his staff received the Environmental Mutagen Society's Alexander Hollaender Award for contributions made to the field of genetic toxicology and to the goals and mission of the Society; they also participated in 104 peer-reviewed publications; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wassom served on the editorial board of *Mutation Research* from 1976 to 1980 and on its board of managing editors from 1981 to 2000; he also served on a number of working groups, including those appointed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer from 1972 to 1985 and the International Committee for Protection Against Environmental Mutagens and Carcinogens from 1972 to 1986; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom's interest in and concern about environmental chemicals, combined with his vision for the rapid dissemination of information to researchers and health professionals, propelled him to status as an early leader in modern information science; and

WHEREAS, his intellectual ingenuity was coveted throughout the scientific community, and Mr. Wassom was invited to speak at the EMS 40th Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, where he described for the audience of distinguished scientists the beginnings of EMS and told anecdotes about his famous mentor, Dr. Alexander Hollaender, EMS founder and early director of ORNL; and

WHEREAS, active members of their community, Mr. Wassom and his wife participated in the beautification of Rockwood and helped to organize and host annual tours of the city's historic homes through Rockwood 2000; he also served on the Rockwood Housing Authority Board for thirty years, including several years as Chairman; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom took office as Rockwood City Councilman in July 2009 and served on the Rockwood Electric Utility Board and the Airport Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wassom was an active and devout member of the Rockwood United Methodist Church, which he served faithfully for many years; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom was also deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Wassom enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife of forty-six years, Judy Owings Wassom, and was the proud father of Zoe' Neerman, and her husband, J.J., and grandfather of their children, Jarrod, Joshua, Jackson, and Zoe'-Kate Neerman; he is also mourned by his sister, Jackie Hill, and her husband, Don; the Owings family; many extended family members; and countless others his life has touched; and

WHEREAS, he was preceded in death by his parents, Jesse and Hazel Wassom, and his brother, General Herbert Wassom; and

WHEREAS, John Wassom leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional scientist, public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of John Stanley Wassom, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Wassom.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.